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UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode #68.

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12:30 to 1:30 P.M. C.D.S.T.

JUNE 22, 1933

THURSDAY

ORCHESTRA:

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" --

ORCHESTRA: QUARTET

ANNOUNCER: Battles are won by trained men and not by raw recruits.

This is also true of the war that is waged each year against the great enemy of the forest, -- FIRE. Realizing this fact, the United States Forest Service has spent much time and effort each year in the training of its temporary employees -- the short-term men appointed each year as forest guards, lookout observers, and construction crew foremen. These officers are the "shock troops" and the first line of defense against the Red Enemy. They are the men whose duty it is to discover fires started by human carelessness or by lightning, and to launch the initial attack against the flames. Upon their good judgment and knowledge of what to do in times of emergency depends the preservation of the forest with its many valuable resources, and the safety of the people therein.

This year, under the President's Emergency Conservation Work program, thousands of young men are busy at constructive work in the forests. In the event that bad fires occur, they too will be called upon to aid in the battle, and it is therefore essential that they be prepared. So today, in the Pine Cone National Forest Ranger District, we find Ranger Jim Robbins and his assistant, Jerry Quick, at the newly established Conservation Work Camp, engaged in giving a group of new recruits a little instruction in the essentials of the fire fighting game. Let's see what's going on --

(VOICES OF MANY MEN TALKING -- POLICE WHISTLE BLOWS) --

VOICE OF SERGEANT: (SLIGHTLY OFF) Pipe down, - you guys - Ranger Jim Robbins is gonna give yuh a little dope on fire fightin --

(TALKING FADES TO QUIET)

JIM: Howdy, fellows. -- We've just got time to talk over a few general principles now, I reckon. We'll get down to business later on. -- You listening? -- All right. Just like in everything else, an ounce of prevention in this forest fire business is worth a pound of cure, so the first thing you fellows want to get in your heads - and get mighty straight, too, is that it don't pay to be careless with fire in the woods. You see, most of our man-caused fires are the result of pure carelessness - plain dumbness, in a lot of cases. So, if you fellows are old enough to smoke, I reckon you ought to be old enough to know what to do with your matches and cigarette butts. To discard them only in safe places. See? The floor of our forest isn't paved with cement, you know. If you drop a burning cigarette butt down in the leaves or brush, it's likely to start something. Get the idea?

(CHORUS OF "YOU BET," "YEAH," "WE GET IT," ETC.)

JIM: All right. Well, carelessness with matches and smokes is one of our worst causes of fire. And another bad cause is campfires - if they're left untended, or built too near to inflammable material. If you're building a campfire, scrape all the leaves and litter away first, - clear out of the way - scrape the ground clean down to the mineral earth. And never leave it without putting it out with water - dead out. -- I reckon some of you boys have never been in the woods much before - so now's your chance to learn something about woods ways - and the first thing to learn is care with fire - all the time. See?

(CHORUS OF "YEAH," "YOU BET," ETC.)

JIM: Well, if we have a bad fire season on this Forest this year, we'll have to call on you fellows to help fight fire. It's about the toughest job I know of - it's plenty hard, mean, dirty, hot work - so here's hoping we don't have much of it. -- The important thing is to hit a fire hard and fast. The time to put a fire out is when it's small. Any forester can tell you that. Even old William Shakesperc -- maybe you've heard of him - had the right idea. He said:

"A little fire is quickly trodden out,

Which, if suffer'd, rivers cannot quench."

Well, I reckon it's about time for the dinner bell, so we'll postpone talkin' about the methods of fighting fire till later on.

(BABEL OF VOICES)

(DISTANT SOUND OF DINNER BELL OR LARGE TRIANGLE - LOUD CHEERS FROM BOYS)

VOICE: (OFF) Soup's on!

(BABEL OF VOICES FADES OFF)

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Well, Jerry - the boy's sure don't lose any time makin' for the grub.

JERRY: (LAUGHING) Gosh, no. -- The captain was telling me that some of the boys had gained as much as eight pounds the first week they were in camp, Jim.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) I guess three squares a day looks kinda good to some of these fellows, after being out of jobs so long. Won't do 'em any harm.

JERRY: No indeed. -- They seem pretty keen for the work, too - don't you think, Jim?

JIM: Yep. -- More'n I expected, when you remember that a lot of these boys never had much of an idea of what real work was like before. They've been doing pretty good work on that trail job -- and on the erosion control job too.

JERRY: Yeah, they have.

JIM: It does you good to see a bunch of young fellows get right in and do their stuff, like this. There's been plenty of blisters and sore backs, but it hasn't stopped 'em.

JERRY: Nope. They can take it on the chin, all right.

JIM: Well, the idea back of this emergency conservation work program, you know, is to build men at the same time that we build forests.

JERRY: Yeah -- a double purpose.

JIM: I reckon it's working out, so far. We're getting a lot of useful, constructive work done on our forests all right, - and I can't see how a spell of good honest work in the woods can be anything but good for the men.

JERRY: Yeah. You can notice the difference in 'em already. -- The army men seem to be doing a good job handling the camps, and I guess we rangers can handle our part of the job all right - supervising the work.

JIM: Yep. I never saw a job too big for a ranger yet. -- The President, and his Director of Emergency Conservation Work, have laid down the policy for this program, so it's up to us to see that our part of it is carried out right.

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(SOUND OF TYPEWRITER)

BESS: (COMING UP) Well, Miss Lander --

RUTH: (STOPS TYPING) Oh, hello, Mrs. Robbins.

BESS: You're still hard at it, aren't you?

RUTH: Well, there's so much to be done, Mrs. Robbins.

BESS: Yes, I know. We'd better have a bit of lunch now, though, don't you think. The men won't be back till evening.

RUTH: All righty. -- It -- it's sort of lonesome here at the ranger station when the men are away - isn't it?

BESS: Well, I'm pretty much used to it by now.

I cannot take another step, as I am, I am, I am.

It is not enough, I am not, I am not, I am not.

On the 11th, I am, I am, I am, I am, I am.

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RUTH: Mr. Robbins is so nice -- it's fun having him around here. And Jerry - don't you think he's nice too?

BESS: Of course I do. We're very fond of Jerry.

RUTH: I think he's just m -- uh - yes, he is nice. Oh, I'm so glad the Supervisor sent me up here to help with the work. I'll just hate to leave, when it's over.

BESS: We'll be sorry to have you go, Ruth.

RUTH: Everybody has been just lovely to me here. -- Everybody except the school-teacher, Miss Halloway. She hasn't been friendly at all.

BESS: Hasn't she?

RUTH: Is Jerry engaged to her?

BESS: Well, Mary and he have been awfully good friends.

RUTH: Oh.

BESS: I imagine she must be a little upset about something.

RUTH: Oh.

(PHONE RINGS)

RUTH: There's the telephone, Mrs. Robbins. I'll answer it.
(TO PHONE) Pine Cone Ranger Station. -- Yes? --
(EXCITED) Oh, my goodness! It's a forest fire!

BESS: Oh dear! -- Here, let me take it.

RUTH: Please do! Oh dear, and the men all away!

BESS: (TO PHONE) Hello -- Bald Peak lookout? -- Yes --
What's the direction? -- Sixty-two? (TO RUTH) Bald Peak's reading in sixty-two, Ruth. Take it down, will you?

RUTH: Yes, Mrs. Robbins!

My mission is to give — give the people the word
that they are not alone — that they are not
of course I am not alone — I am not alone
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I am not alone — I am not alone — I am not alone
I am not alone — I am not alone — I am not alone

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BESS: (TO PHONE) Hello? -- Does it look bad? -- Yes. I'll call Windy Mountain lookout and see if he can give me a reading. -- Oh hello, Windy Mountain? -- You're already on the phone? -- Good. -- -- What is it? -- One ninety-seven. (TO RUTH) One ninety-seven, Ruth.

RUTH: Yes, Mrs. Robbins!

BESS: (TO PHONE) Hello? -- Yes, I'll see if I can get Jim at the Conservation Camp. -- Yes. Goodbye.
(HANGS UP PHONE) (TO RUTH) Oh dear! - Ruth, get the camp on the phone while I plot the location of the fire.

RUTH: All right, Mrs. Robbins.

(FADEOUT WITH RINGING PHONE SEVERAL TIMES)

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(FADE IN WITH BABEL OF VOICES - POLICE WHISTLE BLOWS)

VOICE OF SARGEANT: All right, you fellas. Here's the ranger. --
Pipe down, you guys --

(TALKING FADES TO QUIET)

JIM: All right, fellows. -- You needn't be sacred of another lecture. You're the boy's that'll have to do the work this time. -- We've put in a supply of fire-fighting equipment at the camp here, so I reckon about the first thing we'd better do is to learn how to use it. -- Jerry, have you got some of those fire tools handy?

JERRY: Rith here, Jim.

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JIM: All right. -- Here's shovels and axes. (CHUCKLES)
I guess most of you boys know what a shovel and ax
look like by now, huh?

(LAUGHTER AND SHOUTING)

JIM: Well, they're mighty important fire tools. On some of
our National Forests we require every camping party to
have a shovel and ax with their equipment. That's in
case of emergency, and besides that, they're about the
two most useful tools you could have when you're
camping, anyhow. -- Well, let's see -- here's cross-
cut saws for falling snags - and rakes, and brush
hooks, and sledges and wedges. I s'pose these things
are old stuff to some of you men, but I s'pect
there's a lot of you fellows that never worked with
'em before. Ain't that right?

(MURMUR OF AFFIRMATION FROM CROWD)

JIM: Well, here's a back pump, for cooling down the fire
with water and putting out burning snags and spot fires.
-- And here's a flame thrower for starting back fires
to fight the on-coming fire, but you've got to know
your onions to use these things, - they're only to
be used at the direction of a ranger or experienced
fire boss. -- We've got an instrument here too for
figuring out the percentage of moisture in the air
during dangerous fire weather, - and topographic maps,
and that sort of thing, but we'll work on those later
on -- What do you say we pick up these tools here now,
and go over there in the brush and make believe we've
got a fire to fight? Jerry Quick, here, and I will show
you how we go after 'em.

(BABEL OF VOICES: "OKAY" - "LET'S GO," ETC.)

VOICE OF
SERGENAT: (SLIGHTLY OFF) Hey, Mr. Ranger --

JIM: Yeah, what is it, sergeant?

SERGEANT: There's a telephone call for yuh - they say it's important.

JIM: Okay. Thanks - (RAISING VOICE) I'll be with you in a minute, you fellows -- (PAUSE) (ANSWERING PHONE)
Hello, Jim Robbins speaking. -- Oh, hello, Bess. --
Fire, eh? Got the location? -- Hmm, not far from here. -- How's it look, -- bad? -- Uh-huh. -- No, never mind dispatching the smoke-chaser, Bess. We're going to handle it from here. -- Don't worry, we'll stop it. -- All right, Bess. -- Good bye.

(HANGS UP PHONE) (CALLS) Hey there - how about a couple of trucks - pronto!

VOICE: (OFF) Yes sir - right away!

JIM: (CALLS) All right, you fellows - get those tools together - get ready to load 'em in the trucks.

JERRY: (COMING UP) Is it a fire, Jim?

JIM: Yep.

JERRY: Where?

JIM: On the Pinecrest road - about two miles from here.

JERRY: Is it a bad one, Jim?

JIM: It might be. -- We'll hit 'er from here, Jerry.

JERRY: Okay.

(ROAR OF TRUCKS UP)

JERRY: Here's the trucks, Jim.

JIM: (CALLS) All right, boys - load 'em on.

(CHAPTER 10. THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES)

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(CONFUSED SHOUTS - CLANK OF TOOLS)

JERRY: (SHOUTING) Here, get these back pumps, too. - That's it.

JIM: (SHOUTS) All set? -- All right, climb on, you boys!
(ROAR OF TRUCKS UP; BABEL OF VOICES)

JIM: (SHOUTING ABOVE NOISE) All right, let's go! We're gonna fight fire, you boys - and it won't be make-believe, either!

(FADEOUT WITH ROAR OF TRUCKS)

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(FADE IN WITH SOUND OF TRUCKS)

JERRY: There it is! Pull up right. (TRUCKS STOP) -- Gosh, Jim, - look! She's burning hot over in there!

JIM: Yep. Pretty hot. -- (CALLS) Pile out, boys!

(BABEL OF VOICES CONTINUES THROUGH FOLLOWING)

JERRY: Get the tools, fellows - lay 'em in piles so they'll be handy to get at. (CLANK OF TOOLS) That's it.

JIM: Go to it, Jerry. You take charge.

JERRY: All right -- (CALLS) Hey, fellows - she's burning in a northwest direction - see? -- Ahead of a south wind - so we'll hit 'er on the flanks and pinch 'er in at the top in the shape of a "V."

JIM: That's the ticket. The first thing a good fire fighter does is to size up his fire.

JERRY: (SHOUTING) Hey - you four fellows there - get in there as close as you can on the east side -- will you? -- and clear a fire line three feet wide - right down the mineral soil. Get rakes and shovels. --
(CRACKLE OF FLAMES, CONFUSED SHOUTING, THROUGH FOLLOWING - Fine, that's the system.

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VOICE: (OFF) Gosh, it's sure hot!

JERRY: (SHOUTING) You fellows here - get in on this side - clear a fire line. -- Get in close, here - That's it. -- (LOWER VOICE) How's it going, Jim?

JIM: Watch 'er. The wind's coming up.

VOICE: (OFF) Hey! She's running away over here!

JERRY: (SHOUTING) Come on gang - up and at 'er! -- Get those back pumps -- you two -- there, gimme one -- all right. Come on! -- You other fellows help on the east side there. -- Come on!

(FADEOUT WITH SHOUTING, FLAMES CRACKLING)

(PAUSE, SEVERAL SECONDS)

(FADE IN WITH CONFUSED SHOUTING, OFF)

JERRY: (COMING UP CALLING) All right -- You boys here cold trail the line -- see? Make sure there's no hot spots or fire left. -- You two there follow up with the back pumps and sluice down the line -- That's the system. -- Oh Jim -- Jim, she's under control.

JIM: Yep, looks like it. -- Good work, Jerry.

JERRY: The boys did fine, didn't they, Jim? The fire had us in a tight place there once.

JIM: Yep. Looks like you saved all the trees. Nothing but pine needles and a few bushes burned.

JERRY: Yeah.

1898-1899 (230)

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JIM: (CHUCKLES) Well, I reckon the boys ain't going to forget their first lesson in fire fighting for a long time.

JERRY: I'll say they won't. -- Gosh, look at 'em. They sure are soaking wet. -- (LAUGHS) So am I, for that matter.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Uh-huh. -- Jerry, -- a little while back, I was talking with the Supervisor, and he said that boy Jerry is going to make some fire fighter.

JERRY: Gee, Jim, that's swell!

JIM: I told him he was wrong there --

JERRY: Huh?

JIM: (CHUCKLING) I told him you already are a fire fighter - and a mighty good one.

(FADEOUT)

ANNOUNCER: Yes sir, Jerry showed he knew how to handle a forest fire that time - and the boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps came through in fine shape, too. Another fire that might have spread far and wide and caused untold damage, was nipped in the bud.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, let's join with Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers in honoring three veteran foresters who have recently been retired after many years of valuable service to the Nation. Forest Ranger James A. Simmons of the Cibola National Forest in New Mexico has reached the retirement age after thirty years of service in the great Southwest, where his genial personality and square dealing have endeared him to thousands. -- Forest Ranger Stephen Q. Garst, also the Cibola National Forest, who entered the Forest Service as a guard 24 years ago almost to the day, retires for disability resulting from an accident some time ago. With customary nonchalance, Steve at the time went on with his work. When the X-ray later disclosed his pelvic bone fractured in two places and the doctor wondered how he was able to be up and around, Steve informed him: "Hell, I've been riding horseback for a month."

Forest Ranger Benjamin Heilman of the Gunnison National Forest, Colorado, also retires after 26 years of faithful service, years of hard work in summer's heat and winter's cold, years of splendid accomplishment.

"Where the trail at last is ending in the glowing
evening sun,
And the pine trees beckon gently when the rangers'
work is done."

Rangers Simmons, Garst, and Heilman - here's happy
days!"

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